

Survey British Literature and Culture – Part 5: Modernity and Modernism

[Tue 16-18 // ZHSG 0.001]

! Please study this syllabus closely before registering for the course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION*

The lecture offers an advanced introduction to British as well as Irish literature and culture from the 1890s to the 1920s. These were momentous decades – characterized by mind-boggling scientific advances (e.g. the theory of relativity), new media (e.g. motion pictures), new interpretations of the human condition (e.g. psychoanalysis) and fundamental socio-political transformations (corporate capitalism, the labour movement and feminism) as well as new dimensions of violence (especially in the course of the First World War).

The focus will be on the ways in which literature chimed in with, responded to or reacted against this contradictory process of 'modernization.' Before contextualizing and discussing 'classical modernist texts' by writers such as W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf or T. S. Eliot, we will look at a selection of seminal late-Victorian works, among them Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

The lecture is part of a series that provides surveys to key periods in British literary and cultural history.

RESPONDING TO THE 'CORONA LOCK-DOWN' ...

a) 'Distant' lecturing

This will be an unusual semester, but we will seriously undertake the experiment of conducting the lecture in the 'virtual realm.'

In consequence, WueCampus will become yet more important than usually. → Please **visit the virtual course room immediately after registering** for the lecture – and then **at least once a week**.

To a still larger extent than in a normal semester, the learning progress of students will depend on their willingness and capacity for **organizing themselves**, making use of the **materials provided on WueCampus**, doing **assigned readings**, and following suggestions for **further reading** or research.

I am still toying with the options, but the plan is to present the lecture as a series of **'recorded slide shows with narration.'** These will be uploaded to WueCampus on a weekly basis: each new instalment should be available (as a file) at the time for which the regular lecture is scheduled. → Please **download the 'slide show'/lecture and play it within the same week**.

Should it become possible to return to normal lecturing, I will of course do so.

* The 'Corona lock-down' will necessitate teaching all or parts of the lecture 'online.' In order to adapt to these changed conditions, I have diminished the scope of the lecture. In consequence, the following course description differs from the one originally published.

b) 'Distant' assessment

Instead of a final test, assessment will be according to the **portfolio principle**:

→ In the course of the semester, there will be **three portfolio assignments**: one after the first third of the semester, one after the second third, and one set for the first examination week.

These portfolio-assignments will consist in a **mixture of tasks** – such as for example:

- reporting on your reading progress,
- answering factual questions,
- researching specific issues,
- writing short analyses of texts dealt with in the lecture, etc.

Successful completion of the portfolio-assignments will depend on regular passive and active involvement in the course (i.e. **listening to / watching the slide shows** every week as well as **reading** literary and scholarly texts in the context of the lecture).

Students will be asked to hand in their responses to the portfolio-assignments **electronically** (uploading their files to WueCampus) and **at a specific date**. In order to successfully pass the course, it will be necessary to gain at least 60 out of a total of 100 pts.

READING (before the beginning of the lecture period)

Especially under present conditions, the success of the lecture and the learning progress of participants very much depends on guided reading and independent study.

All essential sources and assigned readings are accessible online (often through the university library; otherwise they will be made available on WueCampus).

a) Secondary literature

The following book (an advanced introduction designed for students) is essential secondary reading for this course. Parts of the book have been designated assigned reading for the first couple of lectures (please see lecture programme below):

Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) [accessible online through UB WÜ].

For introduction and contextualization the following book is also recommended:

Peter Childs, *Modernism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017) [accessible online through UB WÜ]; esp. the introduction (pp. 1-40) will help you find your bearings.

A good overview of the period's literature and a good introduction to its historical contexts is provided by:

Paul Poplawski, "The Twentieth Century, 1901-1939," *English Literature in Context*, ed. by Poplawski, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017) 470-540. [No full version accessible online yet. We are testing the options. Meanwhile, parts of the texts can be accessed via 'Google Books.']

For further secondary reading, see especially the various pertinent books in the Cambridge Companion series (available online through UB WÜ), for example the companions to *Modernism* (1999), to *Modernist Culture* (2015), to *English Novelists* (2009 – with chapters on Th. Hardy, J. Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, J. Joyce, V. Woolf and others) or to *Modernist Poetry*

(2007 – with chapters on "The Poetics of Modernism," Pound, Eliot, and Yeats). // See also the reading suggestions in Lewis.

b) Primary literature

A minimal selection of primary reading is designated 'assigned reading' in the programme below. However, it is strongly suggested to read also as many of the other literary works listed as possible.

PROGRAMME

! Please visit the WueCampus course room immediately after registering for the lecture and then at least once a week.

DISCUSSION FORUM: For each course week/topic, there will be an open discussion forum on WueCampus. This is where you can and should post your comments and queries on the topics and concepts dealt with in the readings and lectures. Regular contributions will be appreciated. Please make sure to *always read* (and respond to) the posts provided by other members of the group.

AR = assigned reading. → Please read/view & prepare *at least* these primary and secondary texts carefully for the respective meetings.

The programme may be adjusted in the course of the semester. Always see WueStudy, please!

Week 1 – 28/04

Introduction:

Modernization | Modernity | Modernism

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" (1913). [LINK](#) [AR]
- Jacob Epstein, *Rock Drill* (c. 1913) [artwork].
- Paul Nash, *We are Making a New World* (1918) [artwork].

Key secondary text:

- ❖ From: Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) [accessible online through UB WÜ]:
Preface (xvii-xxii) // Beginning of introduction (1-3) // Subchapter "Crisis of Representation" (3-10). [AR][†]

[†] I have distributed the various parts of Lewis's long introduction as assigned reading among the first weeks of the semester. This will allow participants to tackle this essential text bit by bit. However, there will be no absolute match between the progress of these readings and the individual lectures.

Week 2 – 05/05

Victorian Progress and Late Victorian Anxieties

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush" (1900). [\[LINK\]](#) [AR]
- Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891). [\[LINK\]](#)
- H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895).

Key secondary text:

- ❖ From: Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) [accessible online through UB WÜ]:
Subchapter "Modern Times" (11-17). [AR]

Week 3 – 12/05

Imperialism, Racism and the Cultural Work of Literature

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899). [\[LINK\]](#) [AR]
- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899/1902) [accessible online through UB WÜ].

Key secondary text:

- ❖ From: Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) [accessible online through UB WÜ]:
Subchapters "Hermeneutics of suspicion" (17-26) & "Making it New" (26-33). [AR]

Week 4 – 19/05

First portfolio-assignment set on Tue. 19/05 (value: 30 pts).

→ Please hand in your response by Fri. 22/05, 12 a.m.

Week 5 – 26/05

W. B. Yeats and the Irish Renaissance

Key literary/cultural samples:

- William Butler Yeats, "Easter 1916" (1921) [\[LINK\]](#) [AR]
- William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902).

Week 6 – [02/06 = university holiday (Tuesday after Pentecost); no lecture]

Week 7 – 09/06

Parochialism, Modernity and Modernism: James Joyce

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914).
→ Focus on "The Sisters." [\[LINK\]](#) **[AR]**
- Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

Week 8 – 16/06

Gender, Morality, Sexuality

Key secondary texts:

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929).
→ Focus on chapter ONE of the essay. [\[LINK\]](#) **[AR]**
- D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)

Week 9 – 23/06

Second portfolio-assignment set on Tue. 23/06.

→ Please hand in your response by Fri. 26/06, 12 a.m.

Week 10 – 30/06

The Great War and the War Poets

Key secondary texts:

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Rupert Brooke, "Peace" (1915). [\[LINK\]](#) **[AR]**
- Jessie Pope, "The Call" (1915) [\[LINK\]](#) & "War Girls" (1916) [\[LINK\]](#).
- Siegfried Sassoon, "Survivors" (1917) [\[LINK\]](#) & "Glory of Women" (1918) [\[LINK\]](#).
- Wilfred Owen, "Dulce and Decorum Est" (1917/21). [\[LINK\]](#) **[AR]**

Week 11 – 07/07

Psychology, Perception and the Concept of 'Art' / 'the Artist'

Key secondary texts:

Key literary/cultural samples:

- Artworks by Wyndham Lewis, Vanessa Bell & others.
- Poetry and other writings by Mina Loy.

Week 12 – 14/07

A 'Summa' on Modernization? – T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922)

Key secondary texts:

Key literary/cultural samples:

- T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922). [\[LINK\]](#)
 - Focus on section I: "The Burial of the Dead." [AR]

Week 13 – 21/07

Third portfolio-assignment set on Tue. 21/07.

→ Please hand in your response by Fri. 29/07, 12 a.m.

Course coordinators:

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Please contact Ms. Seit with questions concerning technical problems (WueCampus etc.) or the accessibility of course materials.

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Please contact Ms. Sazhumyan with questions concerning assessment modes or the contents of the course etc.